

# A TRIPLE-A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

## HON. BILL RICHARDSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 24, 1995

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, as the chaos of major league baseball's labor dispute continues to unfold, the spirit of baseball is alive and well in minor league baseball and the 1994 Pacific Coast league champion Albuquerque Dukes are ready for the new season.

Regardless of the outcome of the major league strike, the Albuquerque Dukes will continue to set the pace for well-managed professional baseball businesses in the country. The Dukes boast 8 straight years of 300,000-plus in attendance, a record average gate for 1994, a waiting list for advertisers, and competitive teams every season.

The Dukes' general manager and president Pat McKernan personifies the enthusiasm and devotion that prevails in the hearts of all baseball fans. By combining old-fashioned business sense and community support, Pat McKernan provides one of the most affordable family entertainment offerings in New Mexico.

I recommend to all my colleagues the following article about Mr. McKernan and the Dukes which appeared in the Albuquerque Business Times on March 6, 1995. I believe all Members will be encouraged to see that baseball and business can coexist for the good of the community and the sport.

ALB.'S BOOMING BASEBALL BIZ  
(By Michael G. Murphy)

ALBUQUERQUE.—Considered a gem—if not the gem—of Triple-A diamonds in the rough, the Albuquerque Dukes are buffing the bleachers, lifting new light towers, and making ready for '95.

Sometimes hidden by its on-field sports success, the local slice of America's pastime ranks year after year as one of the most prolific and well-managed professional baseball businesses in the United States.

This year—strike or settlement in the majors—stands to be yet another winning season in terms of gate, advertising, and general bang for entertainment buck.

The Dukes' boast eight straight years of 300,000 plus in attendance, a record average gate for '94, a waiting list for advertisers, not to mention competitive teams every season.

Business and the support of the community has been wonderful, said President and General Manager Pat McKernan.

Economic impact is not a useful phrase for him ("They make those numbers up, don't they?") but reluctantly, has led the charge. He has been flanked by Ron Nelson, president of the Uptown Association, and Cathy Leyendecker, board member of the Mark Twain Neighborhood Association.

Leyendecker has a different view for future projects, but sided with Salazar and Nelson in a uniform front he will point to the parent organization of the minors—the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues (NAPBL)—which does dabble in financial figures.

According to a recent NAPBL model, an average Triple-A club generates about \$13 million a year in everything from hotels, meals, travel, local goods and services, scouts, umpires, and salaries.

Now, that is a SWAG or Scientific Wild Ass Guess in NASA parlance, said Neil Thueson, an associate planner with the city of Albuquerque who also teaches a UNM market research class in sports administration.

"It had some validity because it is based on kind of a model, but it does not apply to any single city."

And that is one reason the city is embarking this year on its own SWAG that will measure the impact of the Dukes all by themselves, Thueson said.

There is one given: the Dukes provide one of the most affordable family entertainment offerings anywhere, and it doesn't happen accidentally.

"McKernan deliberately does keep the prices down so that it can appeal to the family. He really does understand what he is doing. He understands the difference between the types of pricing policies."

Thueson said he has tried over the years to explain McKernan's expertise and success to UNM athletics, and how it could benefit the university.

"We talked to them about overall profitability and tried to get them to understand . . . but they never would."

McKernan, the barrel-chested and bearded business and baseball guru prefers interesting conversation, which doesn't include talk of pricing policies, corporate management, or even how the Dukes will do this year ("I don't know," he says).

McKernan likes to ask your age, get an answer, then add, "Oh, you just look old." He also enjoys inquiring, "Your second marriage?" and how you managed to screw up such a promising job elsewhere to end up here.

But the Dukes' resident optimist, wearing a "what, me worry?" expression, did talk about how just about anything that could happen with the strike should benefit the organization, and all minor league ball for that matter.

If the strike continues without replacements, it's the only game in town.

If the strike continues with replacements, it's arguably going to be a better brand of the only game in town.

And if the strike is settled, any residual fan resentment at the major league level—live, on TV or radio—can only boost Dukes' attendance, and the listening and occasional viewing audience.

It is a win-win-win situation, McKernan said.

There is an "understanding" among baseball owners, major league players, and the minor league players to make sure minor leaguers don't endanger their future careers by getting in the middle of the strike, McKernan said.

Management has no intention of "twisting any arms" to try to get Triple A players to become replacements, he said.

"They understand the dilemma. And we understand the dilemma far more than the players' association."

If the strike continues, they will report to the Dukes, probably right before the first game, April 6.

There is one possible negative, and that has to do with the chance that Congress, in screwing around with baseball's federal anti-trust exemption, will accidentally repeal a portion that allows major league financial support for the minors.

Still, McKernan, whose photo should be right next to laid-back in your Webster's, has not been losing any sleep. As he said, it is not something he can do much about, so he is not going to worry about it.

His cluttered office includes the Optimists Creed on his door, a Far Side calendar on his desk, a fish tank, and a photocopied motto that the "floggings will continue until morale improves."

The Dukes enjoy phenomenal community support. Last year, when they announced a ticket price increase of \$1, local media published the story with variations on the

theme of "it's about time" and still one of the best entertainment values in town, a bemused McKernan said.

It was the first price hike in eight years.

In about four weeks, the minor league boys of summer will strut their stuff in what promises to be an excellent and perhaps record-setting year.

Oh yeah, and the bottom line looks good again for the successful business that is the Dukes.

"We do all right . . . we survive in spite of ourselves," McKernan said.

## COMMENDING THE HEROIC ACTIONS OF SECRET SERVICE AGENTS

### HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 24, 1995

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as ranking member of the House Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, I rise today to commend nine members of the U.S. Secret Service for their heroic efforts in helping rescue almost 2 dozen individuals from a burning building in Washington, DC.

Many Americans view the role of agents of the U.S. Secret Service as that of protecting the President of the United States and the members of his Cabinet—which it is. However, on March 14, officers Thomas F. Owens, Jr., Gregory S. Cleckner, Paolo Palumbo, Phillip M. Bernal, George L. Sax, Kenneth J. Bouley, Kenneth B. Parsons, and Sergeants William S. Rick and Charles F. Kuzmovich of the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service, went beyond their assigned duties and helped to evacuate 21 residents from an engulfed building on 14th Street NW in Washington, DC.

The Secret Service officers on the scene, even prior to the arrival of the fire department, not only went door to door and helped residents leave the structure, but they also assisted a number of individuals who were trapped in windows and were afraid to leave the structure.

Mr. Speaker, the quick-thinking efforts by these nine Secret Service agents undoubtedly helped to save the lives of a number of individuals and I hope my colleagues join me in saluting their heroic efforts.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO JUDGE NICHOLAS TSOUCALAS

### HON. THOMAS J. MANTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 24, 1995

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the Queens Borough Lodge No. 878 in honoring Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas, Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, for his service to his community, his County, and the Second Department.

A native of New York City, Judge Tsoucalas, began his education in the public elementary and secondary schools of New York City. He continued his higher education of Kent State University where he received a

B.S. degree in business administration in 1949. In 1951, he received an LL.B. from New York Law School where he also took graduate courses in immigrant law and federal practice and procedure.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Tsoucalas also has a distinguished military career. In 1944, Judge Tsoucalas entered the Navy where he served our country until 1946 as a radio operator on board APD and transport vessels in the European Theater of War as well as the Caribbean and North Atlantic. When the Korean conflict erupted 1951, he reentered the Navy and served on aircraft carrier, U.S.S. *Wasp*, until December 1952.

Mr. Speaker, following his service in the military, Judge Tsoucalas was admitted to the New York bar in April 1953. He specialized in immigration and admiralty law. Judge Tsoucalas has had a varied and distinguished legal career. Some of these positions include assistant U.S. attorney for Southern District of New York from 1955–59, appointed supervisor of the 1960 census for the 17th and 18th congressional districts in 1959, and finally, his appointment as Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade by President Ronald Reagan on September 9, 1985.

In addition to his prestigious political and legal work, Judge Tsoucalas has been very active in his church and community. He is the former president of the board of directors of the Greek Orthodox Church of Evangelismos, and a member of the St. John's Theologos Society. Further, he was a member of the executive committee of the Republican Party of New York County. Judge Tsoucalas is married to Catherine Tsoucalas and has two lovely daughters, Stephanie (Mrs. Daniel Turriago) and Georgia (Mrs. Christopher Argyrople).

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in commending Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas, for his outstanding legal career and his commitment and dedication to his community, church and family.

#### TRIBUTE TO DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

##### HON. W.G. (BILL) HEFNER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 24, 1995*

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to note the 200th anniversary of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies of the University of North Carolina. These organizations, founded by the university's earliest students, were established to promote useful knowledge and the cultivation of lasting friendships. From their ranks have come such great Americans as President James K. Polk, Senator Samuel J. Ervin, Jr., novelist Thomas Wolfe and the distinguished former Representative from North Carolina, David Price.

It has been said that the history of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies is the history of the university. They are the oldest student organizations of the Nation's oldest public university. The societies claim the creation of the UNC's newspaper, yearbook and magazine, and giving the university its famous colors, blue and white.

The vision of these organizations can be seen most clearly in their first transaction; the

purchase of books. These individual collections eventually resulted in the endowment of the university's library. The societies also began collecting portraits of their distinguished alumni and those representing their ideals. That collection is now the largest privately owned portrait collection in North Carolina.

It is entirely appropriate, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to these two societies whose innumerable contributions to the development of the University of North Carolina, cultivation of state and national leaders and steadfast commitment to noble objectives have guaranteed their honored place in North Carolina history.

#### THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

##### HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 24, 1995*

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Peace Lutheran Church in Steeleville, IL. On August 9, 1996, the church will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

I would like to congratulate the Peace Lutheran Church and its pastor, Rev. Dr. James R. Little, on this momentous occasion. The community of Steeleville has greatly benefited from their inspirational efforts.

The church has been diligent in its commitment to the work of the Lord, and the good news gospel. Peace Lutheran Church works for the good of the community by servicing its congregation as a member of the southern conference affiliated with the central Illinois senate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I ask my colleagues to join me as I acknowledge Peace Lutheran Church on their 100th anniversary and for their selfless dedication to their community.

#### SALUTE TO RON MEEK

##### HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 24, 1995*

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a selfless public servant who—in addition to a long list of other accomplishments and commitments—has served for the past year as president of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Ron Meek moved to Simi Valley 15 years ago and in that relatively brief period has established a record of community service to which lifelong residents should aspire.

The father of two young sons, Ron has always placed a major emphasis on children and has been a strong local advocate of the Boy Scouts of America, the Simi Valley Boys and Girls Club and has also served as a little league coach. His wife Jan is president of the Simi Valley Unified School District PTA and, together, they cook meals for the homeless each month.

As managing general partner of the Oakridge Athletic Club, Ron is also a local businessman who has successfully merged his professional life and his desire to make his city a better place to live.

He has donated health club equipment to the local schools, has supported the Simi Valley Education Foundation and, in his own right, has been a loyal chamber member.

As chamber president, Ron has compiled a long list of accomplishments that will endure far beyond his 1-year term.

He formulated a business retention and development division to ensure that the chamber was doing all it could to attract new businesses to Simi Valley and to retain existing ones. He introduced several new initiatives aimed at encouraging individual members to be more creative and to allow the chamber to capitalize on that creativity. He initiated a program to honor long-term members and—through his leadership—made the chamber more likely to attract new members.

Mr. Speaker, Ron Meek has established himself as someone who does more than pay lip service to his desire to help his friends and neighbors. In both his personal and professional life, Ron has proven that he is willing to do the hard, often thankless, work necessary to get results and to improve the quality of life for those around him.

I would like to thank him for his efforts on behalf of his community, congratulate him on a successful term as chamber president and wish him all the best in the future.

#### SSI REFORM

##### HON. WAYNE ALLARD

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 24, 1995*

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, early this year, I introduced H.R. 791, legislation to eliminate supplemental security income [SSI] disability payments for drug addicts and alcoholics. This legislation currently has 48 cosponsors. I am pleased to note that this proposal has been incorporated into the Personal Responsibility Act—the Republican welfare reform plan.

Over the years many of my constituents have complained about the fact that drug addiction and alcoholism are considered disabilities under Federal law. This classification entitles these individuals to hundreds of dollars of disability payments each month. Until last year, they were even entitled to large lump sum payments. In essence, hard working taxpayers are required to subsidize addicts. We all have compassion for people with a substance abuse problem, but giving cash benefits to addicts is not the way to deal with the problem. This approach does far more harm than good, often providing the very resources for addicts to continue their abuse and avoid treatment.

A General Accounting Office study found that between 1988 and 1994 the number of drug addicts and alcoholics receiving SSI disability payments rose almost 700 percent from 12,694 to 100,771. GAO expects a continued increase to over 200,000 by 1997 if nothing is done. This would be grossly unfair for the hard working Americans who pay the bills.

Under the Personal Responsibility Act, drug addicts and alcoholics lose SSI payments and Medicaid. The total savings to taxpayers is \$1.7 billion over 5 years—\$400 million of this is used to fund additional drug treatment and